of India & Others have upheld the validity of fast track courts scheme and have also issued certain directions for the smooth functioning of fast track courts and the monitoring of their performance by the High Court.

(b) As per available information, 706 fast track courts were functional in the States as on 30th June, 2002.

(c) As per available information, 58,662 cases have been disposed of by the fast track courts.

(d) The fast track court scheme is mainly aimed at expeditious disposal of long pending sessions cases and cases involving undertrials who have been in jails for a long time. As per available information, 1,35,502 long pending cases have been transferred to fast track courts out of which 58,662 cases have been disposed off so far.

Disposal of pending cases in High Courts

1297. SHRI RADHA CHANDRA SEKAR: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that more than five lakh cases are pending before the High Courts for more than a decade; and

(b) if so, the action taken to reduce the period of trail and burden on the parties for early disposal of pending cases?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI K. JANA KRISHNAMURTHI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Both the government and the Judiciary are concerned with the quick disposal of pending cases. Various steps have been taken by the Government for speeding up the disposal of these cases. These include simplification of rules and procedures on the basis of the advice and recommendations of expert bodies like the Law Commission, the Malimath Committee etc.

Civil Procedure Code has been amended and the amendments have been brought into force with effect from 1.7.2002 which, inter-alia, limit the number of adjournments which can be granted to a party to three, provide for speedy process service by speed post, courier services, fax or e-mail, authorise the court to fix time limit for oral arguments & provide for a nunber of other measures aimed at ensuring expeditious disposal of cases.

The Minister of Law, Justice and Company Affairs has been addressing the High Courts periodically for filling up of vacancies of judges in the High Courts. Efforts are also being made to adopt alternative modes of dispute resolution, such as, arbitration, conciliation and settlement of cases through Lok Adalats.

Speedy disposal of cases

1298. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be please to state:

(a) whether there has been any discernible improvement in the speedy disposal of Civil cases since enforcement of new guidelines governing disposal of CPC cases;

(b) the major recommendations of Justice V.S. Malimath Committee constituted to suggest reforms to the Cr. P.C.; and

(c) the amendments Government propose to make to take care of increasing number of criminal cases stalled due to witnesses turning hostile in the courts, leading to acquittal in most of the cases?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI K. JANA KRISHNAMURTHI): (a) The Amendments to the Civil Procedure Code, 1908 have been brought into force with effect from 1st July, 2002 only. It is too early for any discernible improvement on the disposal of civil cases.

(b) Justice V.S. Malimath Committee on Reforms of Criminal Justice System has not yet submitted its report.

(c) The Law Commission of India has recommended some amendment to section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure 1973. The Report of the Law Commission would be processed after it is laid on the Table of the House, in consultation with the State Governments, as Criminal procedure and Criminal law are on the Concurrent list of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution of India.

Electoral Reforms

1299. DR. ABRAR AHMED: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be please to state:

(a) whether Government have taken decision on Electoral Reforms